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1. SOVIET MARSHAL ROKOSOVSKIY TO COMMAND TRANSCAUCAZUS

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Soviet Marshal Konstantin Rokossovskiy, former Polish defense minister and most recently deputy defense minister of the USSR, has been appointed commander of the Transcaucasus Military District, which borders Turkey and Iran. He replaces Army General Fedyuninskiy who was recalled to Moscow, according to a 23 October broadcast from Tbilisi.

The appointment of a Soviet marshal known by the West to be a competent field commander may be intended to demonstrate Soviet determination to support Syria. Only four of the USSR's 18 military districts had been commanded by marshals. The Transcaucasus Military District is one of the smallest, normally garrisoned by two armies of four divisions each, and commanded by an army general. Because of its proximity to the Middle East, it may now warrant a commander of Rokossovskiy's stature.

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3. POLITICAL UNREST IN JORDAN

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The government of Jordan is seeking to turn the recent resignation of six opposition deputies to its advantage during the next two months by having more co-operative legislators elected to replace them. Operating under martial law, the Hashim-Rifai government should be able to force the election of the government's candidates, despite popular opposition.

Subsequently, the government plans to introduce a new election law designed to make possible the election of a still more cooperative legislature.

A new cabinet shake-up on 22 October suggests that the government is preparing stiffer internal controls to counter popular hostility. Interior Minister Madadha has relinquished his duties as military governor general and minister of defense in order to concentrate on combating subversion; Army Chief of Staff General Majalli has assumed the additional post of military governor general; and Akif Fayiz, only cabinet representative of the militant Bedouin whose support ensures King Hussayn's control of the army, has become minister of defense as well as minister of agriculture.

Jordan also continues to be plagued by its inability without outside financial assistance to maintain its army, which alone keeps the King's pro-Western regime in power. Saudi Arabia's postponement of subsidy payments has compelled the minister of finance to request an immediate emergency advance payment of \$3,000,000 from US aid allocations in order to meet 25 October payroll and operating requirements of the Jordanian army.

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4. SITUATION IN LAOS

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Laotian government and Pathet Lao negotiators have signed an agreement setting forth the details for re-establishing royal authority over the two Pathet-held provinces and forming a coalition government, according to an official broadcast on 22 October. This development moves the two sides closer to final settlement, and implements the intention of the as-yet-unpublished communiqué agreed on by Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma and Pathet leader Souphanouvong.

While details of the agreement reached by the negotiators have not yet been published, the royal government's original bargaining position already contained major concessions. It envisioned a 50-50 division between Pathet and royal administrative and technical functionaries and the retention, at least temporarily of the village "people's representatives." The agreement, therefore, probably places the Pathets in a good position to frustrate government orders at the grass-roots level.

In preparation for the settlement, the National Assembly has already enacted both a civil liberties law and an amnesty demanded by the Pathets. The assembly has also enacted a law aimed at restricting future Pathet subversive activity, but strict enforcement of the law is problematical.

Souvanna plans to enlarge the present six-man cabinet on 25 October, but has assured American officials that Pathet representatives will not be included at this time. He anticipates that a coalition government will be established in early November. He appears to have seized the initiative while the restraint previously exercised by conservative elements led by Interior Minister Katay is conspicuously absent.

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5. CZECH REGIME CRACKS DOWN ON "HOOLIGANS"

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Czechoslovak Minister of Interior Rudolf Barak publicly charged on 21 October that a recent increase in youthful "hooliganism" is subversive and implied that members of Western diplomatic missions had played a role in its organization.

A street brawl in Prague on the night of 12-13 October resulting from the arrest of two drunken soldiers apparently precipitated a country-wide roundup of youths regarded as potential troublemakers. A Prague newspaper reported on 22 October that 105 youths had been arrested in Prague, and added that police had identified 344 gangs composed of over 2,000 hooligans throughout the country.

High-level government action against undisciplined youth was probably prompted by fear of a repetition in Czechoslovakia of the Warsaw student demonstrations of early October. Allegations of Western influences are in line with other accusations of espionage and sabotage which the Czechs have directed against the NATO nations since September.

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6. GUATEMALAN ARMY NULLIFIES 20 OCTOBER PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

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Late on 23 October, the Guatemalan army under Defense Minister Colonel Juan F. Oliva, ordered the 20 October presidential election nullified. Oliva acted under strong pressure from army colleagues, some of whom are demanding that a military junta rule the country, and after violent popular demonstrations and a growing general strike protesting what defeated presidential candidate Ydigoras Fuentes claimed to be a rigged election.

Oliva is concerned with possible adverse United States reaction to his move and seems anxious to retain a semblance of constitutionality, stopping short of an out-and-out military coup. Reportedly, interim president Luis Arturo Gonzalez is to remain the figurehead president until new elections can be called in the indefinite future. Army pressure for a military junta may, however, prove irresistible. In any event, Oliva is likely to remain the strong man and the government firmly anti-Communist, though probably moving closer to the political right.

Ydigoras, who claimed to have been defrauded of victory in the 20 October election by the administration political machine, won overwhelming support from the country's urban, politically conscious minority. The administration candidate, Miguel Ortiz Passarelli, won a majority of the votes only by virtue of the control of the government machine over illiterate Indian voters in rural areas.

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